

WHITE PAPER

How Today's Operators Bring Dining Choice — and Smiles — to Residents





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For operators who have made the switch, the sight is common: smiling residents, happy in the dining room. Residents perk up when the server comes to the dining table, tablet in hand. They enjoy not just eating, but ordering. It's the connection. The communication. The safety.

When it's a server they know, they quickly see their profile and rest assured that the server will either immediately enter their order or help guide them in their choice. If it's a server they don't know, they can introduce themselves and the server will soon have their photo on screen in front of them, any potential confusion dissolved.

"I can tell you that what I've observed is all very positive," says Daniel Novak, Corporate Director of Food and Beverage at All Seasons Senior Living, which switched from a top restaurant point-of-sale provider to senior living-centric eMenuCHOICE. "When a server pulls their name up, their picture pops up, and they get a big smile."

All Seasons is one of four operators in this white paper sharing how working with eMenuCHOICE lets them bring dining visibility to residents — and wins for staff, families and the business itself.

In this white paper, hear from:

- Ebenezer Senior Living
- CRISTA Senior Living
- The Waters
- All Seasons

UNDERSTANDING SENIOR LIVING-CENTRIC DINING

Inside the eMenuCHOICE difference

For all of the benefits that eMenuCHOICE brings to senior living stakeholders, everything boils down to one concept: connection. Whether the connection between staff and residents, what a resident ate before and what they might eat today, or the act of ordering and collecting revenue, the technology creates an interconnected experience.

That's why when Brenda Johnson, Vice President of Operations of Ebenezer Senior Living, thinks of eMenuCHOICE, her mind goes to its roots: skilled nursing facilities. After all, if a system can handle the speed of skilled nursing, it can handle anything.

"In a SNF, you have residents coming in and going out, with a pace that is much faster than assisted living," says Johnson, who also worked with eMenuCHOICE earlier in her career.

"There have been times (in SNFs) when residents miss a meal. They're very ill coming out of a hospital, they're laying in their bed, they might have an altered cognitive status or are busy getting shuttled to and from doctor or therapy visits, and they miss coming out for the meal. With eMenuCHOICE, every time you serve a meal, you mark it. And at the end, the staff can look back and say, 'No one marked off George. Let's bring the meal to George.'"

Senior living-centric dining...

- Uses technology to remove barriers between staff and residents
- Helps residents make healthy dining choices, tailored to them
- Boosts business bottom line by reducing errors and lost time



EBENEZER Headquarters: Edina, MN | Community Count: 115 in 6 states

“ We were looking for a solution to our billing problem and something to help us navigate allergens and different diets, with all data in one location. We started small with a handful of buildings; as we've grown and our needs have grown, eMenuCHOICE's capabilities have grown as well.”

- **Marc Weber**, Regional Culinary Consultant

The Top 4 Reasons Senior Living-Centric Dining Program Matters

The operators in this white paper represent different sized portfolios, care settings and geographies, their experiences using eMenuCHOICE have many similarities. Together, they reveal the top four reasons that operators should embrace a senior living-centric dining program.



- 1 The specific needs of senior living.** You're not running a restaurant, you're running a senior living community that has a restaurant inside of it. That comes with specific needs that generic restaurant software does not fulfill.
- 2 Helping your staff in new ways.** Empower your team to offer a more personalized resident experience, without extra work for staff.
- 3 Capture missed revenue.** Multiple operators discussed the challenges of capturing all revenue in a paper system.
- 4 Gaining efficiencies: how the little things make a big difference.** Whether accounting for family meals, staff meals, splitting bills, tracking meal delivery or gaining a big-picture look at an overall operation, gaining insight into dining helps operators keep residents happy.

WINS FOR RESIDENTS

The 3 ways senior living-centric dining helps residents

Leadership at All Seasons was getting frustrated with their POS provider.

The Michigan-based luxury brand senior living operator had long worked with an established, industry-leading point-of-sale provider that had delivered solid results. The trouble was that they were geared to restaurants, not senior living, and there were issues, especially in billing, that a general POS provider could not address.

“We needed something more personalized for senior living, something that was going to give us more flexibility with billing and tracking the orders,” Novak says. “And we’ve been fortunate that we found eMenuCHOICE.”



Helping residents eat safely

At its core, eMenuCHOICE brings all senior living stakeholders’ complete vision into all things dining. For residents, that means servers helping them make dining choices, starting with safety: diet and allergies. The system accounts for every resident’s food allergies, intolerances and therapeutic diets. It also has automatic triggers to prevent residents from ordering meals they cannot eat, offering replacements instead.

“The resident knows that we’re looking out for them and making sure they’re safe, making decisions that are in their best interest,” Novak says. “I think they appreciate that.”

The key to this protective system is that it works directly with a community’s EHR. When new residents arrive, the information includes dietary restrictions and allergies. That information then automatically feeds into eMenuCHOICE; when residents are then ordering food, the server enters their name and their profile appears, their dietary needs included.

If a resident asks for a food item that violates their diet, the system prevents servers from placing the order. Instead, servers are trained to choose an alternate or remind residents that they cannot eat a specific food item due to certain ingredients.

“Food items in eMenuCHOICE are flagged with ingredients that interact with those items,” says Katie Tibbits, Business Systems Administrator of CRISTA Senior Living. “Regular point-of-sale systems could never do that.”



Helping residents eat what they want

When seniors move into senior living, they are leaving a lot of autonomy behind. Operators account for that.

“Our residents moved away from their homes where they had access to their refrigerators and cupboards full of everything they want, and they’re moving into a senior living community that typically has one venue, maybe two,” says Kari Stolz, (RD, LD, LALD), National Director Food, Beverage & Procurement. “It can feel very limiting.”

The goal, she notes, is to offer residents variety and choice, ideally making senior living dining as diverse an experience as dining outside of community living. All Seasons has a mix of on-the-go options for residents: bars, bistros, grab-and-go or snacks. Because their independent living only has lunch and dinner, these additional dining options become must-have stops for residents.

CRISTA Senior Living utilizes a similar advantage, as some of their IL residents don’t have meals included with rent, and instead can purchase a la carte or sign up for a pre-paid meal plan per month.

“We had residents who were not eating in the dining room because they did not want to eat an entire meal,” Tibbits says. “Now with the meal plan, if they just want to get a bowl of soup, they can because it’s included just as a whole meal would be.”

Why families appreciate eMenuCHOICE

Even the most dedicated family members cannot be at a senior living community every day. With eMenuCHOICE, family members can help Mom and Dad maintain healthy, safe, enjoyable eating.

“One of the features on eMenuChoice empowers families to help their loved ones make those choices, with the resident portal allowing family members to advocate for their loved one in memory care,” Johnson says. “It has a lot of unique features.”



CRISTA Headquarters: Silverdale, WA | **Community Count:** 3 IL, 2 AL

“ We were not able to track anything in the cafe with our old system. There was a disconnect between the kitchen supply people and the servers who were throwing away expired product. So we’ve seen a lot of savings just by running reports out of eMenuCHOICE.”

- **Katie Tibbits**, Business Systems Administrator



Helping residents avoid food they simply don't like

No system should be inflexible to exceptions. When eMenuCHOICE raises a warning not about allergy or diet restriction but about a resident simply disliking a meal, servers can override that as needed. Novak offers an example of an errant warning: Mrs. Jones dislikes egg salad. Are you sure you want to proceed?

The server then asks Mrs. Jones if she likes egg salad. She corrects them: she doesn't like scrambled eggs.

"Then, if a family member questions it, we can pull up variances and see that Mrs. Jones wanted the egg salad, so we gave it to her," Novak says. "It helps protect the resident from allergens that may cause distress while giving us the documentation we need to override it."

Add it all up, and residents are not just getting more options: they're getting everything faster, whether via dining reservations or decreased kitchen mistakes.

"They have vocalized their enthusiasm and appreciation in getting their meals quicker," Stolz says. The Waters does resident satisfaction surveys online every month, and for almost two years in a row, the top two choices around satisfaction of dining are "variety of menu choices" and "quality of food."

"And eMenuCHOICE certainly contributes to that," she says.

Private pay means cost consciousness

While the billing and business benefits to operators are massive, many residents are aware of those needs too. That's because IL is private pay.

"Our residents are very interested in us using technology that reduces cost," Johnson says. "They want us to turn the lights off, use energy-efficient bulbs or have green rooftops. They are informed and are eager to see us succeed."



WINS FOR STAFF

Why tablets top turnover

When expansion came, The Waters Senior Living made the switch.

The Minnetonka, Minnesota-based operator was using one senior living-centric POS system with all of its communities, but when they were opening a new community in Wisconsin about two years ago, they took it as an opportunity to trial a modernized system that is not tied to a kiosk. They found that system in eMenuCHOICE.

“It was a win-win,” Stolz says. “Staff really liked the tech and the table-side iPads entering their orders. No longer did we have servers standing behind a kiosk to enter orders so it created efficiencies. And furthermore, the residents felt the efficiency and the speed in getting their meals.”

With 13 communities, largely in Minnesota, the large staff of The Waters — whom they call “team members” — immediately took to the new systems. “Our team members feel the efficiency of the system,” Stolz says. That could in part be for a reason that Novak broached: with high turnover in senior living dining, many staff members are young.

“Staff love it — they’re mostly teenagers or college-aged, and they are so accustomed to technology that it’s easy for them,” Novak says. The resident photos means that new staff members aren’t going to “confuse the four Mrs. Joneses who live in your building,” he notes, while veteran staff members don’t have to worry about learning someone’s likes or dislikes and then making a mistake because someone’s diet changed.

The program works in real time, with real-time updates. When something changes, everyone knows.



THE WATERS Headquarters: Minnetonka, MN | **Community Count:** 13

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- **Kari Stolz (RD, LD, LALD)**, National Director Food, Beverage & Procurement

WINS FOR OPERATORS

Solving the billing — and paper — problem

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ALL SEASONS Primary Location: Michigan | Community Count: 6

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- **Daniel Novak**, Corporate Director of Food and Beverage

Tracking orders, food waste — and doing so at scale

Ebenezer has 115 communities in six states, with 97 in Minnesota. The Waters has 13 communities in three states. All Seasons has six communities: four in Michigan, one in Arizona and one in Florida. The Silverdale, Washington-based CRISTA has two large campuses in Washington, with three IL facilities and two AL. For all of these operators, viewing dining not just community by community but at scale is critical.

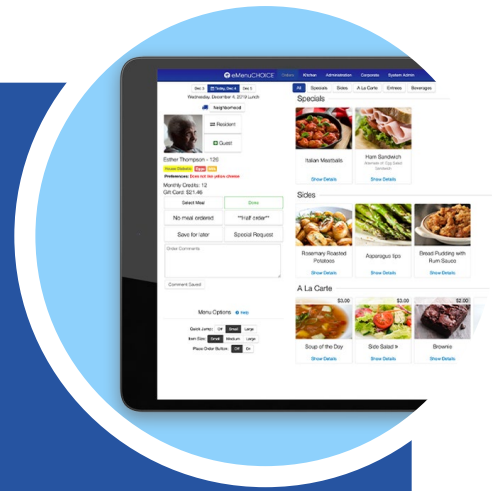
“As the corporate user, I like it because I’m able to look at all my communities at once,” Novak says. “I’m able to do roll-up reports, see my sales percentages on certain days, drill down to one site or look at the portfolio all at once.”

Part of keeping residents happy is customizing meals as they see fit, he adds. “You can have your IL residents on a declining balance meal plan or meal credits or however you want to do it, and then have a separate plan for your memory care and assisted living,” he says. “It really allows you within each community some flexibility in terms of how you run your program.”

Tied to this challenge: inventory control and budgeting. CRISTA offers an IL cafe. That was great for residents but, for a long time, bad for business.

“We were not able to track anything in the cafe with our old system,” Tibbits says. Food waste was a problem. Lost food totals were unknown. They faced uncertainty over how much inventory to keep on hand. And they had little insight into what they were selling.

“There was a disconnect between the kitchen supply people and the servers who were throwing away expired product,” she says. “There wasn’t any way to manage that. So we’ve seen a lot of savings that way, just by running reports out of eMenuCHOICE.”





Bringing smiles to residents, one efficient meal at a time

For operators who have made the switch, a senior living-centric point-of-sale system is more than just good business. It's a pillar of a strong community.

At All Seasons, CRISTA, Ebenezer and The Waters, the sight of happy residents is the best ROI of all.

TO LEARN MORE ABOUT eMenuCHOICE, CONTACT:

SALES@EMENUCHOICE.COM



EMENUCHOICE.COM